



AUGUST 2009 EDITION

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Salina Human Relations

“... with liberty and justice for all.”

THE MISSION OF THE SALINA HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION IS TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AND TO ESTABLISH EQUALITY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL PERSONS WITHIN THE CITY OF SALINA THROUGH CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT, ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION.

Salina's kids learn to COUNT

Dozens of kids who take part in the Salina school district's free lunch program already have learned how to make an impression on the 2010 census.

As a means of teaching children and their families the importance of an accurate census count, the “We Count” committee of Salina asked children at various free lunch sites to help make banners consisting of colorful handprints. The banners will be used at “We Count” promotional events.

The “We Count” committee, which is headed up by the Salina Area United Way, has been meeting for several months with a goal of developing a plan to have the most accurate census count possible. Census figures can have a big effect on receiving governmental funding as well as other economic development issues.

Salina Human Relations is involved with the “We Count” effort, especially as it pertains to reaching “hard-to-count” people groups.



ABOVE: Janet Callerman of the Salina Area United Way gets some help with a We Count awareness event at Oakdale Elementary. **RIGHT:** About 50 kids and parents took part in the Oakdale event.



Racism alive, well in America

Recent racial incidents show much work is left to be done

Think blatant racism in America is a thing of the past?

Think again.

In June, Dustin Nix, 21, of Donaldson, Ark., conspired with others to force a woman and her young children from their home because she associated with African-Americans.

According to court documents, Nix and others erected a wooden cross in front of the victims' home and attempted to set it on fire. Nix pleaded guilty in July and faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine.

Also last month, the Iowa Civil Rights Commission issued a report on hate crimes that noted the following incidents in 2007:

- A 17-year-old Ottumwa boy was charged with criminal mischief for allegedly hanging a dead opossum and a note insulting blacks and Latinos in a school bathroom.

- Racial slurs and graffiti were spray-painted on the Marshalltown home of a minority family supporting Barack Obama, and their Christmas presents were stolen.

- In Cedar Rapids, racial slurs, swastikas and threats (including a hangman's platform and the words “Leave Now”) were painted on the home of a black couple on Christmas Eve.

We hope that you will join with us at the Salina Human Relations Department in advocating for equality and justice for all people.

Doing the little things can be big

By **Gina McDonald**
Director, SHRC

"We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee." —

Marian Wright Edelman, activist, president and founder of the Children's Defense Fund

What an important message from Ms. Edelman. If we could take every opportu-

nity to make a small difference, how much could we change in the world? How



Gina McDonald At this time of financial crisis and hot weather, both of which tend to make people cranky, what a great time to practice our morals, or faith or whatever you call it.

much better is the world because of the small differences people make every day?

What an important time to let people know you appreciate them, that they are OK. What a great time to do something for someone else, especially for someone who cannot possibly repay you.

What an opportunity to practice patience (my own particular challenge).

This month, I am not going to try to change the world, just my own space. Happy summer!

You can e-mail Gina at
gina.mcdonald@salina.org.

Enjoy the food, family fun and entertainment at the

Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

2:30 to 6:30 p.m. — Sunday, Sept. 13 — Oakdale Park

Calendar of Events

Aug. 8: Teen Summit 2009, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., The City, 129 N. Seventh. The event includes food and entertainment and will have discussion topics including multi-cultural awareness, peer pressure and law enforcement.

Aug. 11: Salina Human Relations Commission monthly meeting, 5:30 p.m., Room 105 City-County Building. (Time set aside for public comment).

Aug. 16: NAACP-Salina monthly meeting, 3 p.m., Salina Art Center, public is invited.

Aug. 17-20: Orientation for the first week of English as a Second Language, ABE and GED classes at Salina Adult Education Center, 309-4660.

Aug. 18: American Red Cross CPR & first-aid training course, 145 S. Broadway. For more information, call 827-3644 or visit the American Red Cross web site at www.northcentralkansas.redcross.org.

Aug. 21: Volunteer Connection's "Connections of the Heart" greeting card premiere and "Art and More" silent auction, 5-7 p.m., Christ Episcopal Cathedral Parish Hall, 138 S. Eighth, 823-3128.

Aug. 29: St. John's Missionary Baptist Church fall concert, 5 p.m., 215 S. Chicago.

Aug. 31: League of Women Voters annual membership meeting (public invited), 7-8:30 p.m., Prescott Room, Salina Public Library. Speaker will be Kansas Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh; refreshments will be served.

Sept. 20: The WIYOS concert, 6 p.m., Roosevelt - Lincoln Auditorium at Pioneer Presidents Place, 220 S. Eighth. Tickets and more information about The WIYOS available at www.zimkin.com/events.

Teen Summit 2009 seeks to get Salina teens on the same page

In response to a what may have been a racially motivated shooting on March 10, 2008, a citywide forum was called two weeks later in Salina.

The problem was that the apparent problems were between black and Hispanic youth, and very few young people attended the forum.

In an attempt to give Salina's youth a voice — and to supply them with information that is intended to help prevent future violence — Sandra Beverly of the Salina Human Relations Department organized Youth Summit 2009.

The event will be from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 8, at The City teen center, 129 N. Seventh.

"This forum is an offer to the youth of Salina to engage in conversation with supportive, caring adults that want to see them succeed in life," Beverly said. "Your ideas are valuable and your energy is priceless, so please come and share what it is you want this community you live in to know about you — your dreams, your hopes and your desires."

The purpose of the summit, Beverly said, "is to let the youth of the Salina community know we are here to support you and listen."

The event will include a free lunch as well as a variety of discussion topics, including multi-cultural awareness, peer pressure, education, you and the law, spirituality and physical and mental well-being.

The Teen Summit also will feature a time when Salina youths can put their talents on display.

The public is welcome to attend. For more information, call Sandra Beverly at 309-5745.

DID YOU KNOW?



"My apartment buildings have ramps for wheelchairs, so I'm compliant, right?"

Not necessarily. Under the Fair Housing Act, there are seven requirements regarding accessibility. For example, housing units must have usable public and common areas, doors, light switches and kitchens and bathrooms. For the full list, go to www.fairhousingfirst.org/fairhousing/requirements.html

SHR upgrading its Internet site

In an effort to better serve the public, the Salina Human Relations Department has begun upgrades to its web site.

Changes include the addition of links that allow users to easily download items such as rental applications and agreements, notices to quit, requests for reasonable accommodation or modification and copies of the Kansas Landlord/Tenant Act.

Our site can be accessed by going to the city's web site, www.ci.salina.ks.us, and clicking on "Departments" and "Human Relations."

We hope to soon have a new web address which will make it easier to access the site. We'll keep you posted.